

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY / MIDDLE EAST UPDATE
November 27 - December 4, 2013

1. [Secretary Kerry at NATO Headquarters in Brussels](#) (12-03-2013)
 2. [Rasmussen Urges Afghanistan to Sign Security Agreement](#) (12-03-2013)
 3. [Security Advisor Rice at Global Fund Congressional Breakfast](#) (12-03-2013)
 4. [Carter Bids Farewell to the Defense Department](#) (12-02-2013)
 5. [Kerry on Reductions of Iranian Crude Oil Purchases](#) (11-29-2013)
 6. [NATO Envisions Post-ISAF Train, Advise and Assist Mission](#) (11-29-2013)
 7. [Hagel Calls, Praises Service Members on Thanksgiving](#) (11-28-2013)
-

1. [Secretary Kerry at NATO Headquarters in Brussels](#) (12-03-2013)

Remarks by Secretary of State John Kerry at a Solo Press Availability at NATO Headquarters Brussels, Belgium

SECRETARY KERRY: Good evening, everybody. Before we get to a discussion of the NATO business, I'd like to just spend a brief moment, if I can, saying something about events that the whole world is watching, and that is the situation in Ukraine. The powerful expressions of support for Europe in cities all across the Ukraine have really been quite extraordinary. People of all different backgrounds are giving voice to their very real and very deep aspirations, and we urge the Ukrainian Government to listen to the voices of its people who want to live in freedom and in opportunity and prosperity. And we urge all sides to conduct themselves peacefully. Violence has no place in a modern European state. And to work together, we think that is really the goal that everybody in the Ukraine should be pursuing, work together to get the Ukraine back on the road to European integration and to economic health. And we hope that that can happen as rapidly as possible.

Let me say that I'm very pleased to be back in Brussels and to be here working alongside my 27 fellow allied foreign ministers to prepare for the NATO summit in Wales that will take place in September of next year. 2014 is really going to be a pivotal time for NATO and for a transformation that is taking place with respect to NATO engagement and responsibilities. It will be a pivotal time for our alliance and for the transatlantic relationship.

We will mark a number of very important anniversaries in the U.S.-European relationship next year: 100 years since Sarajevo and the outbreak of World War I; 70 years since Normandy; 25 years since the Berlin Wall fell; and 15, 10, and 5 years since NATO's post-Cold War enlargements. As our nation honors those anniversaries and comes together for both the EU and the NATO summits, we have to take every single opportunity in order to renew our commitment to the transatlantic relationship and to cement NATO's role as the transatlantic core of a global security community.

The Secretary General has outlined three key areas for the South Wales summit: first, the way forward in Afghanistan; second, the capabilities that NATO will need to continue as the most successful political and security alliance that the world has ever seen; and third, NATO's critical partnerships with countries from outside of the alliance.

Today, we discussed and we will discuss at much greater length tomorrow the tremendous progress that has been made in transitioning to full Afghan leadership in providing for that country's security. We will also address the importance of maintaining a strong commitment to Afghanistan even after we end the NATO combat mission next year. The United States is committed to do its part in contributing to the new mission to train, advise, and assist Afghan security forces after 2014.

As that combat mission comes to a close, we must keep or make certain that we keep NATO finely tuned to be able to invest in the capabilities, the exercises, and the training that will enable all of our nations to be able to address the challenges of the future.

One lesson that we can certainly draw from NATO's history, and that is the value of helping to support local security forces, particularly as a means of stabilizing post-conflict situations. We now need to institutionalize this ability to be able to train, and we need to do what we can to help countries that need and want our support in that training exercise.

Today, we also spoke about how we can energize existing partnership frameworks like the ones that exist in the countries of the Mediterranean and the Gulf, and how we can deepen cooperation with our key operational partners, those most capable are willing to deploy with us when and if needed. Both of these objectives will be critical parts of protecting our ability to deploy whenever and wherever needed.

We also recognized that the security threats of the future are not going to look like the security threats that we face today in many respects. I joined Minister Paet in signing a U.S.-Estonian Cyber Partnership Statement earlier today, and that commits both of us to do even more together in order to combat this real and growing security concern within the cyber sphere.

When NATO was established more than 60 years ago, President Truman remarked, "If there is anything inevitable, if there is anything unconquerable in the world today, it is the will of the people of all nations for freedom and peace." Since then, NATO has played an absolutely essential role in supporting that will around the globe. As we build on today's discussions and focus on our partnerships, our capabilities, and our enduring commitment to Afghanistan, I personally have every confidence that NATO will continue to protect freedom, continue to try to push for and bring about peace, and it will do so for decades to come.

So I thank you very much for being here and I'd be delighted to answer any questions.

MS. PSAKI: The first question will be from Michael Gordon of the New York Times.

QUESTION: Sir, the former commander of NATO and American forces in Afghanistan, General John Allen, a man whom you've asked to help with the Middle East peace process, wrote last week

in an op-ed article that it was a mistake to insist that President Karzai sign a BSA this year. And his basic argument was that the United States should not let one man – a departing president, no less – stand in the way of an agreement. As he wrote, “The United States should stay patient. It can say to Mr. Karzai if you want to reinforce Afghan democracy by letting your successor sign this security deal, we can live with that.”

Given all the sacrifices and the stakes involved, why is it – why shouldn’t the United States wait till after the next election, which is in April, for the agreement to be signed? What is the real deadline? And the NATO Secretary General just told us that he himself is not setting an exact date.

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, I’m not going to get into – I don’t think I’ve ever spoken with respect to a hard, fixed specific date except that the President of the United States has urged him to sign it by a period of time – urged him. I don’t think he set an ultimatum.

But the reason, Michael, is very clear. I mean, we’re not – this is not fooling around. This is serious business. There are over 50 nations who are engaged here through NATO in trying to help Afghanistan. And those nations have budget cycles. Those nations have planning requirements. Those nations have equipment requirements. They have deployment requirements. And all of those things are best managed with planning.

So what we are asking for is the optimum, which is to try to manage this transition in Afghanistan. And it is interesting that the vast majority of people in Afghanistan – the Loya Jirga, which President Karzai himself made the decision to go to – came out with a judgment that this ought to be signed so that it would optimize the opportunities for this transition in Afghanistan.

Now, can you maybe muddle through? Can you do other things? That’s not the issue here. The issue is: How do you get the best transition possible? How do you do the best planning possible? How do you lay the best groundwork possible? How do you give confidence to people in Afghanistan? How do you give confidence to the military that is in the midst of training? How do you give confidence to all those people running for office next year who are looking for some certainty as to what the basis and foundation of that election might be about?

And I think that it is important for the agreement to try to move forward. Now, it doesn’t have to be – his minister of defense can sign it, the government can sign it, somebody can accept responsibility for this. But I think it is important for planning purposes, for people who have been extraordinarily patient, who are trying to allocate major amounts of money to sustaining this effort in Afghanistan, to have knowledge of where they’re going.

We negotiated this agreement. I personally negotiated it with him and we came to a conclusion, and the President agreed and stood up and said this is what we’re going to do, we’re going to send it to the Loya Jirga, and if they approve, then we’ll send it to parliament and go forward. Now, I don’t believe in renegotiating unilaterally, and I don’t believe in and I don’t think President Obama appreciates, the amount of sacrifice that has been made by our troops, by the American people to contribute to the future of Afghanistan, that this somehow is being left in doubt at this critical moment. And I think all of our colleagues here today voiced a desire for their planning purposes and for the confidence that comes with the knowledge that we are moving in the same direction, that they all voiced hope that this can be done sooner, not later. And I think that’s what we need to aim for is sooner, not later, because that is what is best for Afghanistan.

MS. PSAKI: The next question will be from Ana Pisonero from Europa Press.

QUESTION: Secretary General, what more – what can NATO do to influence events on the ground in Ukraine? I mean, would the U.S. support maybe a more radical change of doing EU sanctions or something against Ukraine, or is this not something that we should think about at this time and just give space to both parties?

SECRETARY KERRY: I think NATO has done what it has done today, which is make a statement about it, but I don't think NATO has a role. NATO is a defense alliance. It's a national – it's a security alliance. And NATO has spoken out, out of its concern, but it does not have a role, does not play a role, and is not contemplating a role. This is really something that the people of the Ukraine need to work out with their leadership, and the leadership needs to listen to the people and work out with the people.

Clearly, there is a very powerful evidence of people who would like to be associated with Europe and who had high hopes for their aspirations to be fulfilled through that association. And we stand with the vast majority of the Ukrainians who want to see this future for their country, and we commend the EU for keeping the door open to that. But that is not a NATO piece of business, beyond the statement that it has issued today.

MS. PSAKI: The final question is from Elise Labott of CNN.

QUESTION: Thank you. Mr. Secretary, if I could just follow up on that, I mean, NATO is a defense alliance, but the U.S. gives a lot of money to Ukraine; it does have a lot of influence. So what can the U.S. do in particular? And to add to that, Russia has been taking a lot of heavy-handed tactics to stop this – people who have greater desires for economic integration with Europe. For months, they've taken a number of punitive measures to discourage East European nations from forming trade agreements with the EU, such as in Moldova where you're visiting. So why aren't you speaking out more forcefully on this?

And while I have you, on the issue of detained Americans, we have several serious cases pending right now. The case of Merrill Newman – can you discuss what's being done to bring him home? Today is also the fourth anniversary of Alan Gross's detainment in Cuba. He says his nation has abandoned him. What do you say to that?

Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, let me speak first of all to Ukraine. Europe and Europe's friends all decline to engage in a rather overt, and we think, inappropriate bidding war with respect to the choice that might or might not be made. And that choice, obviously, is distinguishable between a choice made by the leadership versus the choice that is being made by the people. And that's why people in unbelievable numbers are demonstrating across the Ukraine, because Mr. Yanukovych has obviously made a personal decision, and the people don't agree with that decision.

We, like our European friends, believe that the people of Ukraine ought to have the right to be able to express themselves freely, without violence, and that the leadership in the Ukraine ought to listen to them. And there's some evidence that in the last 24 hours that leadership has responded by saying that the door may, in fact, remain open and that they may relook at this issue. I don't know.

I do know that we feel very strongly that they ought to make their own choice. They ought to be able to decide who they want to affiliate with, without a bidding war either in personal terms or in national terms, but rather based on the benefits that are available to them and the life that comes with it and the rights and benefits that they would like to be able to reach out to.

And I think that we've spoken out very, very clearly that we're closely monitoring the situation on the ground. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland will be going there tomorrow and she will be joining other ministers who will be there for meetings. I personally will be going to Moldova in order to support that country's European choice. And I look forward to visiting Ukraine when it, too, gets back on the path of European integration and economic responsibility. And we've spoken out very clearly about our desire to see the people of Ukraine be able to have their aspirations met by their own leadership in peaceful ways, without violence, which has no place in a modern European state.

That said, with respect to the number of American citizens who are being held in different places, we have been deeply involved in discussions on every one of those citizens. And we have been engaged behind the scenes – which is often the way these issues are best managed – in every single case in order to try to secure the safety of those people, and in order ultimately to be able to secure their release. And that is true of each of the individuals that you have listed.

In the case of Mr. Gross, we've had any number of initiatives and outreaches over the last several years and engagement with a number of different individuals who have traveled to Cuba, met with people individually there and elsewhere. And we are currently engaged in some discussions regarding that, which I'm not at liberty to go into in any kind of detail.

But the bottom line is that we have raised these issues not just in Korea – North Korea, not just in Cuba, but also with respect to a number of Americans who are held in Iran. And I have personally raised those names and those individuals with my counterpart as well as in other ways. And we are hopeful that in each case, at some point we will be able to win their freedom and have them rejoined with their families.

One day is too long to be in captivity, and one day for any American citizen is more than any American wants to see somebody endure. This has been too long in every case, and we will do everything we can and continue to. But these things are often best resolved in quiet diplomacy, under the radar screen, behind the scenes, and that is exactly what we have been pursuing. And when, in fact, we secure their release, the track record of those outreaches and those initiatives will speak for themselves as to how much effort and energy has been put into trying to secure their release. And God willing, we will get that done sooner rather than later, we hope.

MS. PSAKI: Thanks, everyone.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you.

Related Sites:

[Background Briefing on NATO Ministerial, Kerry's Trip in Europe](#)

[Details of Travel to Brussels, Chisinau, Jerusalem and Ramallah](#), December 3-6, 2013

[2. Rasmussen Urges Afghanistan to Sign Security Agreement \(12-03-2013\)](#)

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3, 2013 – NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen opened the NATO Foreign Ministerial in Brussels today welcoming the Loya Jirga's endorsement of the U.S.-Afghan security accord and urging the Afghan government give it a "timely signature."

“The recent Loya Jirga showed very clearly the progress Afghanistan is making,” he said. “The Afghan forces did a remarkable job in ensuring that a gathering of such scale took place in a peaceful manner. And the participants delivered a clear message for continued partnership and cooperation.”

Speaking to reporters at the two-day ministerial, Rasmussen called the bilateral agreement important to the legal framework for the NATO-led mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces post-2014.

“We will be working closely with the Afghan government in the weeks ahead on this issue,” he said.

Afghan security forces “are already quite capable. But we do believe that they need our continued assistance, and that’s why we are prepared to deploy the so-called Resolute Support mission to Afghanistan,” Rasmussen said.

“My concern is that if we are not able to deploy a training mission to Afghanistan, it may have a negative impact on the security situation ... and on the provision of financial aid to Afghanistan,” he said. It could also jeopardize pledges to finance the Afghan security forces and provide development assistance to the country, he noted.

Everything, he emphasized, hinges on a signed security agreement.

“It is clear that if there is no signature on the legal agreement, there can be no deployment and the planned assistance will be put at risk,” Rasmussen said. “It is my firm hope and intention, therefore, to continue our efforts to support Afghanistan once these agreements are concluded.”

Attendees at the foreign ministers’ sessions in Brussels are meeting with International Security Assistance Force partners and the Afghan foreign and interior ministers to discuss current operations and get updated on preparations for next year’s elections, he reported.

They kicked off meetings today with discussing about NATO’s summit next year in the United Kingdom. The summit is expected to focus on ensuring the alliance remains “fit, outward-looking and ready to respond to the challenges the future will bring,” Rasmussen said.

“There, we will chart the future of this alliance,” he said.

Biographies:
[Anders Fogh Rasmussen](#)

Related Sites:
[NATO](#)

3. Security Advisor Rice at Global Fund Congressional Breakfast (12-03-2013)

Remarks by National Security Advisor Susan E. Rice at the Global Fund Congressional Breakfast

Good morning everyone. Thank you very much Michael for your introduction. Thank you Mark for your extraordinary leadership. Distinguished members of Congress, thank you for all you have done to make this possible. On behalf of President Obama and everyone in the Administration, I’m here this morning on a very simple mission. And that is to thank the Global Fund for its unstinting

commitment to fighting AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria around the world and to reaffirm America's unwavering support for your tremendous work.

The Global Fund brings many partners together in common cause, and I'd like to thank, especially, two of the partners we've worked so closely with from the very beginning, the Government of the United Kingdom and the Gates Foundation. I'd also like to salute the leadership of current and former Members of Congress, on both sides of the aisle. Congress has consistently provided broad bipartisan support for PEPFAR and the Global Fund over so many years.

And as Michael said it is a tribute to what we can do when we come together in common cause. Michael you and Mark were both present at the creation of President Bush's revolutionary health initiative, which Congress just authorized for the third time this month, and which President Obama proudly signed into law yesterday. Across two administrations, Washington has consistently come together to sustain the fight to end the global AIDS epidemic.

Once again this year, we raised a two-story tall red ribbon from the North Portico of the White House in honor of World AIDS Day. That public recognition and commitment to continuing the struggle stands in stark contrast to those early years of stigma and shame, when an AIDS diagnosis was tantamount to a death sentence.

I remember how different it was just twenty years ago. Back in the 1990s, I visited more than my share of health clinics in Africa and saw how often AIDS ravaged people had no hope of receiving treatment. But two years ago, when I last traveled to Rwanda as UN Ambassador, so much had changed. I visited a remarkably effective community health clinic offering prevention services and care to mothers and infants exposed to HIV. I also visited a first rate rural hospital treating HIV and other complex diseases with great skill. In the past 25 years, the story of people living with the HIV/AIDS has been transformed from one of tragedy into one of hope.

That's especially true in sub-Saharan Africa, where the Global Fund and PEPFAR are providing treatment for millions of infected people, and where AIDS-related deaths are down by one third, and new HIV-infections have declined by 40 percent. This June, we reached a milestone in our shared work to prevent mother-to-child transmission: the one-millionth baby born HIV-free. In 2008, PEPFAR reached 1.7 million with life-saving treatment. Yesterday, President Obama announced that we exceeded the ambitious HIV treatment targets he set two years ago, in 2011, by almost a million people — today, we are reaching 6.7 million people with life-saving treatment.

These are numbers worth celebrating. But, we're here today because there is still so much more to do. I'd like to thank Dr. Kamwi for his message that the fight is a priority in nations around the world, and something that you and your government remain committed to investing in. Globally, 35 million people are living with HIV/AIDS. More than one million are here in the United States. Around the world, 700 children are infected with HIV every single day. So, our mission is clear. We cannot stop until we have seen the last AIDS-related death, and no child is again born infected with HIV.

President Obama has scaled up PEPFAR's impact massively, and increased our commitment to the Global Fund, including a matching challenge to other donors. The United States will contribute \$1 for every \$2 invested in the Global Fund. If the international community meets the full potential of our challenge, it could increase our current contribution by as much as \$1 billion over the next three years. So as President Obama said yesterday, don't leave our money on the table. Help us to make best use of it.

Ours is a 360-degree approach — from prevention to treatment to support for people living with HIV and their families. By working closely with our partners, we are on our way to achieving the dream we know is possible: the first AIDS-free generation. Not the end of HIV, but a day when the despair and suffering of AIDS is permanently consigned to history.

Yesterday, the President announced that the United States will host a meeting with our international partners next year to set new joint HIV prevention and treatment targets and outline a clear path of action. And, here at home, we are continuing to implement the National HIV/AIDS Strategy, especially in communities where infection rates remain high, particularly among gay men, African-Americans and Latinos.

I want to assure you that the United States will continue to provide strong leadership — in partnership with our friends in Congress. We need other countries to continue stepping up their response. We need NGOs, civil society and the private sector to sustain their contributions. And, we need the international community to track our commitments and help us meet the demands of this grave and urgent challenge.

We've seen how effective we can be when we stand together — the hope we can offer to a father who fears he will not be healthy enough to provide for his family; the reassurance we can give a mother who wonders if she will live to raise her children; and the future we can offer a child born today, HIV-free, who need never know the pain of this disease. That's why we are here today, and that's the reason we can't stop working until we achieve our goals.

Thank you, for all that you have done and all that you will continue to do.

4. Carter Bids Farewell to the Defense Department (12-02-2013)

By Claudette Roulo
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2, 2013 – Senior Defense Department, White House and congressional leaders bade farewell to Deputy Defense Secretary Ash Carter today in a Pentagon ceremony marked by both laughter and tears.

Carter's final working day is Wednesday, but today's ceremony marked his official goodbye to the department.

Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff opened the ceremony by noting that an internet search for "Ashton," brought up the actor Ashton Kucher before Ashton Carter. While the two share a first name, he laughed, according to Politico, Carter is more famous for making "think-tanker's hearts flutter".

Carter "worked without glamor or fame behind the scenes to make sure through good management, common sense and discipline that we are an organization that continues to adapt," during his tenure with the department, the general said.

"I think he's been called the most important, least known figure in Washington," Dempsey added.

Carter, who served as under secretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics from April 2009 until his appointment as deputy secretary in October 2011, had one moment of fame, the chairman said.

During the recent sequestration-related furloughs of Defense Department employees, the deputy secretary — exempt from furlough — returned a fifth of his pay in solidarity with furloughed workers.

“He became known as the superhero of sequestration,” Dempsey said. “We did respect his willingness to put skin in the game, to be personally invested and to think big when many around him were thinking small.”

Long after Carter departs, the nation will continue to benefit from his unfailing focus on mission, on facts and what works, said White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough. McDonough also delivered remarks from President Barack Obama, who called Carter’s work “extraordinary.”

In his two tours at the Defense Department, Carter served under 11 defense secretaries, among them former secretary Leon E. Panetta, who sent his regards in a note read by Jeremy Bash, Panetta’s former chief of staff.

“I couldn’t have done my job as secretary without you,” Bash read. “You are the real deal -- a brilliant and compassionate patriot who brings as much heart to the cause of running the DOD as you do to the bedside of a wounded service member.”

The entire Defense Department has benefitted from Carter’s leadership, said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel.

“His career in public service is a model for all who aspire to real and effective public service,” Hagel said.

The secretary noted that Carter’s practical vision gave hope to those who strive for better things.

“Throughout his career, Ash Carter has shown again and again that he can translate his high ideals into better, more efficient, more effective ways of doing business for our department, for our people and for our country,” Hagel said. “In the course of those efforts, he’s made a better world ... He is a reformer.”

Hagel presented Carter with the Department of Defense Award for Distinguished Public Service with a gold palm, the highest civilian award presented by the secretary of defense. Carter also received the Joint Distinguished Civilian Service Award, the highest civilian award given by the DOD.

“It’s been the greatest privilege of my life,” Carter said of his time as deputy defense secretary. “Nobody accomplishes anything in this building without other people,” he said, noting that he was blessed with a spectacular team of colleagues.

Carter spoke about his hopes for the future, starting with a chance to win in Afghanistan. “Winning is truly within our grasp,” he said. A win means Afghanistan’s people can have a decent, secure life, and America retains its reputation for keeping its commitments to its friends, he added.

“More broadly, I hope we continue to learn ever better ways to combat terrorism, because as long as there is human society, there will be the problem of the few against the many, the aberrant and twisted against the decent and tolerant civilized life.”

“To leave behind the era of Iraq and Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden and face this department towards the challenges and opportunities that will define the future for ... our successors as soldiers and citizens.”

Peace and prosperity will depend in the future on the pivotal stabilizing role of America's military, Carter said. And so, he added, he hopes to see the nation invest in new capabilities in cyber, special operations forces, space, intelligence and more.

"And I hope to see us advance the numbers and capabilities of the alliances and partnerships that the US only, because of the values it represents, has. Our challengers and antagonists have none."

Carter, as he has often done, again expressed strong views about the on-going discord over the federal budget.

"We can fulfill our strategic destiny as the single most important provider of security to the world without the ever-increasing defense budgets we once enjoyed," he said. "But the turbulence surrounding governance in Washington is having serious effects.

"It injects inefficiencies into our programs and industry that we're striving to have deliver better buying power to the taxpayer for their dollars.

"It's unsafe, because it affects the readiness of the forces that would respond to contingencies.

"It's dispiriting to and unworthy of the patriots -- military and civilian -- who serve this government.

"Most seriously, it embarrasses us in front of friends and allies -- and also potential opponents.

"A great and strong nation needs a working government," Carter said.

The uncertainty is purely the result of political gridlock, he added, and the service members and citizens of the nation deserve better.

Carter said he also hopes that the department continues its internal efforts to change the way it operates.

"All of this I hope for you, our amazing force represented by you here," he said.

In emotional tones, Carter told the audience he has "complete confidence, that with President Obama, Secretary Hagel and this superb leadership, the department will meet its management challenges and grasp all the right strategic opportunities ahead for your America.

Biographies:

[Ash Carter](#)

[Chuck Hagel](#)

[Army Gen. Martin E. Dempsey](#)

5. Kerry on Reductions of Iranian Crude Oil Purchases (11-29-2013)

Regarding Significant Reductions of Iranian Crude Oil Purchases

As President Obama has made clear, the United States will continue to vigorously implement our existing sanctions on Iran as the P5+1 seeks to negotiate a comprehensive deal with Iran that will resolve the international community's concerns regarding Iran's nuclear program.

That is why I am pleased to announce that, based on additional significant reductions in the volume of their purchases of Iranian crude oil, China, India, the Republic of Korea, Turkey, and Taiwan

have again qualified for an exception to sanctions outlined in Section 1245 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2012.

These additional reductions were determined based on an analysis of these economies' purchasing activity over the previous six months.

Additionally, Malaysia, South Africa, Singapore, and Sri Lanka have also qualified again for the NDAA exception because they no longer purchase crude oil from Iran.

As a result, I will report to the Congress that exceptions to sanctions pursuant to Section 1245 of the NDAA for certain transactions will apply to the financial institutions based in these countries for a potentially renewable period of 180 days.

This is the fourth time that these nine economies have qualified for an NDAA exception as a result of their continued significant reductions in the volume of crude oil purchases from Iran or their end to such purchases.

The effectiveness of the international sanctions regime has proven essential in bringing Iran to the table to negotiate and agree to the Joint Action Plan that, for the first time in nearly a decade, halts the progress of the Iranian nuclear program and rolls it back in key areas.

As part of the Joint Action Plan agreed to by the P5+1 and Iran, we will pause for six months our efforts to further reduce Iran's crude oil sales. However, the Joint Action Plan does not offer relief from sanctions with respect to any increases in Iranian crude oil purchases by existing customers or any purchases by new customers.

We will continue to aggressively enforce our sanctions over the next six months, as we work to determine whether there is a comprehensive solution that gives us confidence that the Iranian nuclear program is for exclusively peaceful purposes.

6. NATO Envisions Post-ISAF Train, Advise and Assist Mission (11-29-2013)

By Denver Beaulieu-Hains
7th U.S. Army Joint Multinational Training Command

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany, Nov. 29, 2013 – At the end of 2014, the ISAF mission in Afghanistan is scheduled to end and a new train, advise and assist mission called Resolute Support will begin.

During Europe's recent combat training conference, the top brass of more than 35 nations outlined a way ahead to prepare for the transition that involves combined and joint training provided by the Joint Multinational Training Command here.

"There was a lot of discussion about the coming ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] and NATO operational transition in Afghanistan," said Army Col. Thomas S. Matsel, the G3 or chief of operations at the JMTC.

"NATO is going to transition" from its ISAF operations centered in Afghanistan to a force that is prepared to respond across the full spectrum of conflict, Matsel said.

Since JMTC's training events regularly include multinational participation, the discussion is different at other Army combat training centers, Matsel said.

"They are mainly concerned with Title 10 training [training for U.S. troops]. Their focus is on U.S.-based Army units and their ability to conduct combat or contingency operations," he said. "We have that responsibility with our Title 10 forces also, but JMTC, the training command for the U.S. Army Europe also has the task to make sure U.S. Army units are well integrated with our NATO and multinational partners and the place where that happens, and is tested, is here in Europe during our multinational training and exercises."

Simultaneously, at the Hohenfels Training Area in Germany, the exercise Combined Resolve looks at the post-ISAF relationship and the potential for future coalition operations. The training brought U.S. forces and those of Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, France, Norway, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, and Sweden together to challenge systems and develop cultural understanding and trust.

"The training ... is exactly in harmony with what we want to attain in the whole of NATO. After years of training concentrated on Afghanistan, we again want to pay attention to the training of fundamental military activities," the Czech Republic's chief of staff Petr Pavel said about the training. "For us this means training in an environment that we are by no means capable of replicating in domestic conditions."

Pavel said his Army benefits by training with the modern equipment and training facilities available at Hohenfels, as well as the professional cadre of observers, coaches, and trainers.

"We do not have the technical means to assess the training available here in the Czech Republic and we aren't capable of ensuring the multinational participation," he said.

A multinational exercise is planned every month for the next year. The next exercise is slated for Dec. 7-17. The New Jersey National Guard will train at the Hohenfels Training Area with more than seven multinational partners.

"It's important to remember some of the best and most capable security forces in the world are right here in Europe and we must build on the past 10 years of combat operations with our NATO and multinational partners so we are ready for the next emergency or contingency," Matsel said.

Biographies:

[Army Col. Thomas S. Matsel](#)

Related Sites:

[Joint Multinational Training Command](#)
[NATO ISAF](#)

7. Hagel Calls, Praises Service Members on Thanksgiving (11-28-2013)

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, Nov. 28, 2013 – Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel today telephoned troops representing the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps to wish them a Happy Thanksgiving and to praise and thank them for their service to the nation, Assistant Pentagon Press Secretary Carl Woog said in a statement issued today.

Woog's statement reads as follows:

This morning, Secretary Hagel called service members taking part in U.S. operations around the world to wish them a Happy Thanksgiving.

Secretary Hagel expressed his appreciation for their service in defending the United States and supporting our allies and partners. In each of the calls, Secretary Hagel noted that he knows how difficult it is to be away from home on this holiday and thanked the service members and their families for their sacrifice for the nation.

Secretary Hagel spoke with representatives from each military service including the following service members:

Sergeant Stephanie A. Buitron, U.S. Army, 45, of Atmore, Alabama. Sergeant Buitron is responsible for answering, tracking, and responding to radio calls in support of a task force in Kabul, Afghanistan. She previously served in the U.S. Marine Corps and re-enlisted in the Alabama National Guard in 2010.

Petty Officer Second Class Christopher Mefford, U.S. Navy, 36, of San Diego, California. Petty Officer Mefford is currently aboard the U.S.S. George Washington and was part of a helicopter flight team that distributed medical, food, and water supplies to devastated Filipino villages following the typhoon.

Staff Sergeant Jerry T. Nong, U.S. Air Force, 28, of Omaha, Nebraska. Staff Sergeant Nong is responsible for sustaining communication capabilities that support air-tasking orders for military aircraft at Bagram Airbase in Afghanistan.

Sergeant Michael Milory, U.S. Marine Corps, 22, of Peru, Indiana. Sergeant Milory is serving with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit forward.

Biographies:

[Chuck Hagel](#)

Related Articles:

[Ash Carter Visits Troops in Afghanistan on Thanksgiving](#)

Related Sites:

[DOD News Release](#)
